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## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Paul Adams - Editor

Contradictions of the Welfare State, by CLAUS OFFE, edited by John Keane, London: Hutchinson 1984, 310 pp. 6.95 paper.

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Claus Offe played an influential role in the debates and discussions on the capitalist state that flourished among left academics during the late 1960s and early 1970s. This volume includes some of his essays of the last decade, together with a long and revealing interview, and a helpful introduction by John Keane.

Offe presents a view of social policy as being about "active proletarianization" or the "commodification" of the capacity to work. This process of making people into wage labourers is a feature not only of the early development of industrial capitalism, but also of the present. The state is involved in controlling access to various non-market sub-systems, such as the educational, health care, or welfare systems, which are functionally required for the reproduction of labour power. It both provides or subsidizes such activities and politically regulates who is and who is not a wage labourer. In support of the commodity system it extends the sphere of de-

undermining the market. Drawing especially on American neoconservative writers such as Daniel Bell and Nathan Glazer, and neomarxist writers like James O'Connor, Offe argues that "while capitalism cannot coexist with, neither can it exist without, the welfare state" (p 153).

The dominance on the Left of social democracy and stalinism, ideologies which identify socialism with the growth of the state, has enabled the Right to steal Marx's antistatist thunder. While many on the Left have looked to the state as a vehicle for socialist transformation, conservative critics have attempted to analyse the dilemmas and contradictions that arise from the tendency towards state capitalism, to a fusion of the political and economic spheres, of public and private, that have found expression in the Keynesian welfare state. Offe provides an interesting, if highly elliptical, survey of conservative writing about the politicization of the economy, the crisis of ungovernability, the overburdened state, the overload of expectations, and so forth. Offe's contribution is one of summarizing and synthesizing material from diverse disciplines and intellectual traditions. The problem for the general reader is that his writing is often difficult and obscure, it assumes a prior familiarity with the literature under discussion, and tends to elaborate distinctions that hold up, rather than advance, the argument. The reader sometimes suspects, especially in the first essay (in which the influence of systems theory is strongest), that there is less here than meets the eye. Perseverance is, however, usually rewarded by an insight of a felicitous formulation. He suggestively brings out the unargued assumptions of the ungovernability theorists or the unacknowledged political bias and blinkers of the technocratic policy scientists.

While Offe attempts to free himself from the sterile orthodoxies of social democracy and stalinism, he is unable to escape being disoriented by them. As his interviewers point out, his "'theory of the state' is caught within Keynesian assumptions, in that it focuses only upon the relation between 'state' and 'economy' within a single, idealtypical capitalist country. Neither the welfare state's development at the intersection of national and international pressures nor what we might call the overwhelming presence of organizations of violence and coercion seem adequately theorized". (p 270).

But the dynamics of the welfare state, as well as the current tendencies to privatization, cannot be grasped except in the framework of the analysis of capitalism as a world system. It is striking how largely the work of Lenin and especially the Bukharin of The Politics and Economics of the Transformation Period, have been, not challenged or developed, but ignored by neomarxist theorists of the state. What Lenin and Bukharin tried to analyze was precisely the relation of the state to capital, of military to economic competition, of state organization of the economy to the internationalization and militarization of capitalist competition, and, at least implicitly, of imperialist war to the welfare state.

Offe's account of the welfare state and its contradictions is, on the contrary, abstracted from any analysis of the world system. It disregards the opposing tendencies determining the relations among the state, the economy, and welfare, the tendency to state capitalism on the one hand, with its drive to economic autarky, militarization and bureaucratic state management of the reproduction of labour power, and, on the other hand, the tendency to the internationalization of capit-

alism, with the pressures for integration into the world economy, the growth of multinationals and international financial, currency, and labour markets, and privatization (or, as Offe would say, recommodification). Yet an analysis of these tendencies is essential for grasping the significance of Offe's point about the simultaneous necessity and impossibility of the welfare state - that states are driven by the pressures of international competition toward autarky, militarism and state capitalism while at the same time coming up against the impossibility of insulating the national capital from the world market, of building capitalism in one country. Offe's whole discussion of commodification, furthermore, ignores or misreads what Engles already pointed to in the last century, the tendency of the state to take over directly capitalist functions, not only socializing the reproduction of labour power but also exploiting it as a capitalist employer. Like the neoconservatives, he does discuss the "politicization of the economy", and the political legitimation problems that accompany it, but, like them, neglects the extent to which the state, like other capitals, is subordinated to the world economy.

The theoretical insufficiency of Offe's analysis comes out clearly in the political confusion evidenced in the concluding essay, "European Socialism and the Role of the State". Here the antistatism of Marx and Lenin, with their insistence on the need to smash the capitalist state and replace it with a democratic workers' semi-state that immediately begins to wither away is taken to provide support for a strategy of decentralization of the capitalist state. That is decentralization substitutes for workers' power as the solution to the problem of bureaucratic statism. When Eurocommunist politicians talk of decentralizing authority and guaranteeing democratic freedoms they are

not, in Offe's view, simply expressing their reformism or opportunism, but are taking to heart Marx's and Lenin's injunction to smash the state! Offe's book, then, is indispensable for those interested in the development of the "theory of the state" in the 1970s and is valuable for its many suggestive explorations and insights. But do not expect political clarity or an adequate theorization of the welfare state.

The Rank and File Movement in Social Work, by RICK SPANO. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982. 290 pp. \$22.50 cloth, \$11.50 paper.

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Spano's book analyzes the development of the Rank and File movement in social work in the 1930's. This was a broadly based attempt at unionization which included both private and public agency workers. the movement drew together protective, or trade union groups, usually in the public service agencies; discussion clubs, composed of private agency workers and focusing particularly on broad social problems; and practitioners' groups of social workers identifying as professionals and attempting to influence their professional organizations toward social change. The movement developed during the Depression as a response to increased social and economic problems, deteriorating working conditions for social workers, and rapid growth of a public welfare system staffed by young and inexperienced personnel. As Spano notes, the ideology of the movement included 1) a stress

on social workers as employees who needed to identify with the larger labor movement in America and 2) the belief that the problems of Depression necessitated major institutional and political change.

Until recently, the Rank and File has received little attention from social work writers. Documentation of its ideas and achievements would serve an important purpose in acquainting social workers with a significant part of their social action heritage. Unfortunately, Spano's book, while useful in delineating the ideologies of the movement, fails to give a complete picture of its development. The book lacks adequate description of the kinds of workers joining Rank and File groups and it fails to present early on a coherent picture of the types of work conditions prompting unionization. It gives insufficient detail regarding the complex issue of interaction between "mainstream" social work professional and Rank and File members. Thus, while it contains good material on the Rank and File's attempts to develop a broad model of social casework, it fails to explore in any depth the intriguing problem of melding a union movement with a developing profession.

These problems occur for several reasons. First, Spano uses a "social movements theory" framework in a rather heavy handed way, with such stress on labelling events in terms of social movement phases that often the actual event itself, its actors and consequences, is never clearly described. In addition, the framework does not contribute much to our understanding of why the Rank and File developed and why it declined. Second, although Spano acknowledges the holdings of the Social Welfare History Archives at the University of Minnesota, he fails to use the important resources which this center contains, most notably the records of the American

Association of Social Workers and the papers of key social action figure Harry Lurie. Sources outside the SWHA, such as the papers of Rank and File prophet Mary Van Kleeck, are also neglected, as is the excellent dissertation by Leslie Alexander on the influence of the Rank and File Movement within professional social work. Relying for his information largely on secondary works and on the movement's journal Social Work Today, Spano loses a richness of detail and flavor and tends to downplay the movement's diversity. Interpreting the editorial policy of Social Work Today as basically representative of the entire movement's thinking is a particular problem when trying to assess the degree of Communist Party involvement on the part of Rank and Filers.

The book offers some useful material, particularly on Rank and File ideologies, development of a casework model, and relation to minority group causes. However, it fails to give an in-depth picture of the movement's membership, its *raison d'etre*, and its relationship to and impact upon the larger social work profession.

Women and Public Policies, by JOYCE GELB and MARIAN LIEF PALLEY. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982.

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Gelb and Palley document the effect of the role of women and the women's movement on four national policy areas during the 1970's. The authors use a single analytical framework to examine the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments,



the Pregnancy Disability Act and the free choice/right to life struggle including the Hyde Amendments. Legislative and administrative implementation implications are also examined. For each case the analysis includes a discussion of the underlying problem, the nature of the goal sought, the political activities of the women's movement, (such as coalition building within and external to the women's movement), and the existence of a counter movement. For students of social policy, the use of a single, uniform framework to assess disparate case studies is most useful. The authors also make use of Maren Lockwood Carden's (1977) constructs of role change and role equity and suggest that whenever a policy issue is perceived to affect role change, such as influencing the female role of wife, mother, homemaker or sexual being, it often becomes perceived as a threat to the existing value structure and results in the creation of a highly visible, often powerful and united opposition. However when the policy is defined as a role equity issue, merely extending rights enjoyed by other groups and relatively narrow in both scope and implication, the likelihood of support and passage is better. Thus the women's movement which has been criticized as reformist in focus is following the strategy of incrementalism which Gelb and Palley see as the most feasible route to successful policy change.

Gelb and Palley fully discuss the development, mobilization, structure, size, resources and strategies of contemporary women's groups. They use the words 'feminist groups', 'women's groups' and 'women's movement' synonymously, which is conceptually confusing. And while the major women's groups may indeed be "compromise-oriented" and incrementalist in their approach, the inclusion of only the most 'major' women's groups in the discussion too narrowly focuses the question.

A second difficulty with the authors' discussion of the women's movement is that it treats the movement as if it were monolithic, whereas McGlen and O'Connor (1983) convincingly demonstrate the fallacy of this notion. However, the data on the internal workings of these organizations, their budgets, funding sources, salaries paid and interlocking directorates is interesting and useful information for readers.

The first case analysis explores the Equal Credit Opportunity Act signed into law in 1974, which banned credit discrimination on the basis of sex. The authors suggest that women succeeded in winning significant credit reforms because they conformed so tightly to the pluralist "rules of the game". The women possessed respectability, technical expertise and political savvy and kept the credit issue under control by limiting its scope and encouraging the perception that the issue was one of equity, not fundamental change. While James Q. Wilson has argued that new policies are adopted only after a change in opinion, not as the result of group pressure, Gelb and Palley demonstrate the effectiveness of women activists in contributing to the passage of this Act. Of course, other changes were taking place in women's economic rights. but while the credit issue could have been interpreted as role change with economic power being transferred to women, it was treated as an equity issue and as such, had little opposition and relatively easy adoption.

The passage of Title IX of the Educational Amendments, which outlawed sex discrimination in elementary and secondary schools (as well as post secondary institutions), is interesting because it examines a component of social policy analysis frequently forgotten - implementation. Title IX was passed with relative ease in 1972, however it was not until 1975 that regulations for imple-

menting the law were issued. By this time, the implications of this law were becoming clear, which may be why HEW did not release its "policy interpretation" until 1979. Gelb and Palley contend that Title IX did not become law because of the women's groups, but their influence was felt in the subsequent effort to insure that the law was put into effect. The strategy utilized was traditional coalition forming and relentless pressure focussed on the relatively narrow issue of sex discrimination in educational programs. Sabatier and Mazmanian (1981) have developed a framework for implementation analysis which if coupled with this discussion could provide students of policy analysis an excellent picture of the administrative regulatory systems at work.

The issue of free choice in abortion is the subject of the next policy case study. It would seem virtually impossible not to see this issue as a role change issue. A woman's right to control her reproductive capacities is a fundamental right of self determination; the conflict spins around whose rights, the woman's or her fetus. Women themselves are divided on this debate and it quickly may be seen as "threatening" the existing power relationships at the core. Gelb and Palley sift their analysis somewhat in this case study by focusing on the efforts of the women's organizations at the state level to counteract the effects of Congress's Hyde Amendment which prohibited the use of federal funds under Medicaid to pay for abortions. Thus while the right to abortion remains, women must be able to pay for it without the assistance of Medicaid. The author's analysis of this case indicated that it was impossible to contain the implications of the abortion issue and a powerful and effective opposition has developed, as predicted by the Gelb and Palley theory.

The Pregnancy Disability Act, which would be expected to be perceived as a narrow role equity issue, in 1978 became entangled in the free choice controversy and began to look like a role change issue with broad implications regarding the role of women as mothers and homemakers. However, the efforts of the women's organizations to form powerful coalitions with labor and civil rights groups and even some right to life groups, resulted in its eventual passage.

The final chapter of the book summarizes the several factors that the authors believe to be crucial to the attainment of goals in the American political system. They suggest that the issue under consideration must look like it has broad based support but also be narrow enough not to challenge basic values or divide its supporters; there must be a network of people with information and access to decision makers; and there must be a willingness to compromise and incrementalize, thus claiming success when only parts of the goals have been achieved.

The book on the whole is a useful study that accomplishes what it sets out to do. The book's final sentence, "If the women's movement continues to abide by the 'political rules of the game' and if the parameters are drawn around issues selected for advocacy, so that opposing groups are muted, feminists will continue to be successful political participants in an age of declining parties and pluralist expansion of interest group politics", clearly reflects the author's theme. Readers who expect more will be disappointed.